



Mediterranean Travels

*Writing Self and Other from the
Ancient World to Contemporary Society*

Edited by Patrick Crowley,
Noreen Humble and Silvia Ross



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Modern Humanities Research Association and Routledge

MEDITERRANEAN TRAVELS
WRITING SELF AND OTHER FROM THE
ANCIENT WORLD TO CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION



The Mediterranean Turn

Patrick Crowley, Noreen Humble and Silvia Ross

My expansive use of 'travel' goes a certain distance and falls apart into non-equivalents, overlapping experiences marked by different translation terms: 'diaspora,' 'borderland,' 'immigration,' 'migrancy,' 'tourism,' 'pilgrimage,' 'exile.' (James Clifford)¹

The attempt to inscribe the experience and goals of one's travels has taken on such a range of differing forms (pilgrimage, diplomatic reports, diaries, epistolaries, and fictions, among others) that 'travel writing' as a genre remains difficult to map.² The borders of the Mediterranean, like those of travel writing, also remain porous. It exists as a conceptual, geographical and political space, at the same time as incorporating within itself a multitude of recognizable cultural identities, not always reconciled and never entirely fixed.³

The Mediterranean as a site of encounter between Self and Other that can both accentuate and attenuate identity, whether personal or national, is central to this volume. As a travel zone in which explorations of identity and alterity take place, the Mediterranean was, and still is, compelling. It is an unstable space of variable intensities, alliances and tensions: it is where the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia meet. It is where Rome met Carthage, where Christianity meets Islam, where relative European prosperity attracts migrant workers travelling across the Mediterranean and beyond to seek employment.⁴ Travel across this sea has inspired traders, adventurers and writers for centuries, at the very least since Ancient Greece, when it drew the imagination and acted as a spur for both fiction and history. One of the earliest pieces of Western literature, the *Odyssey*, recounts a journey across the breadth of the Mediterranean region, and presents a poetic 'basis for the Greeks' vision of themselves and of others and provides a paradigm for exploring this vision'.⁵ The basis for the Greek self-portrayal can be found in the constant contrasts between humans (i.e. eaters of bread and cultivators of land, worshippers of gods, law abiders) versus non-humans (i.e. eaters of meat, cannibals even, non-cultivators of land, the lawless). Over time this opposition develops into Greeks versus Others who were seen as inferior because uncultured by Greek standards. The story of Odysseus, though in form a fictional epic poem, can, as François Hartog has noted,⁶ be read as a paradigm of European self-exploration. The *Odyssey*, thus, provides a parable, albeit a Euro-centric one, by which the Mediterranean Sea can be read as a zone within which identities are encountered, constructed, and inscribed within relationships of Self and Other.⁷

Equally influential in this regard is Herodotus and his fifth-century BCE *Histories*.⁸ His work is most obviously about the Greco-Persian wars (490–479 BCE) and how they came about. But Hartog, in his magisterial structuralist analysis of Herodotus's work, *Le Miroir d'Hérodote*, has argued that it is also an extended exploration of the cultural differences between Greeks and barbarian Others.⁹ Hartog's work, despite its flaws,¹⁰ has proved to be nearly as influential as its subject in terms of providing a base from which to explore alterity.¹¹ It is this powerful trope of the Other which continues to inform much of how Europe sees its neighbours to the east and south of the Mediterranean. These stories of travel provided a starting point for a humanist tradition that sought to know more about humans beyond the pale.

Travel writing, because of its engagement with other cultures, is therefore, perhaps more than any other genre, inherently preoccupied with the relationship between Self and Other. And through critical reading of such writing we have become more aware of the mechanisms of Othering. Above all we have become aware of persistent 'myths and stereotypes',¹² which have in too many cases been used to justify hierarchies and expansion.¹³ Indeed, Johannes Fabian, in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Subject*, outlines the various ways in which the Other is 'denied coevalness': through a series of techniques, the observed culture is described in such a way that it is perceived as fixed and is thus distanced and relegated to a different time by the observer.¹⁴ Similarly Edward Said's investigation into the archaeology of Western 'Orientalist' knowledge and how it sought to understand the East has shown how such knowledge also served to enable and justify European expansion.¹⁵ Ryszard Kapuściński puts it well:

the [...] problem in contacts between us and them, the Others, is that all civilizations have a tendency towards narcissism, and the stronger the civilization, the more clearly this tendency will appear. It spurs civilizations into conflict with others, triggering their arrogance and lust for domination.¹⁶

Such views and perceptions of the Other, therefore, have played and continue to play a role within the political domain. Indeed, the Mediterranean remains very much controlled by the nation state. In July of 2008, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France sought to revive the Barcelona Process for Euro-Mediterranean relations (1995) and officially inaugurated the Union for the Mediterranean. The gathering of EU and Mediterranean heads of nations and of government that took place in Paris on 14 July saw forty-three nations represented at a series of events that attracted much commentary. Sarkozy's intentions may well have been informed by a mixture of short-term political gain and the long-term economic strategy of the EU.¹⁷ However, many commentators, particularly those from the southern shoreline of the Mediterranean, were cautious. Indeed, one of the concerns raised about Nicolas Sarkozy's Union for the Mediterranean was precisely the issue of the movement of peoples across the Mediterranean and the sense that at stake in the new project was a strengthening of borders. The title of Ali Bensaad's opinion piece, which appeared in *Le Monde*, asks whether the project was about a Europe opening itself to the southern and eastern Mediterranean or a Europe which sought to contain it by controlling immigration.¹⁸ Such attempts to police the movement of peoples across the Mediterranean and the North–South asymmetry that they make manifest have

been partly responsible for the turn towards the Mediterranean as a site of thought on the Other, on the non-European, and on what is understood by 'European'.

Such concerns had been expressed even before the meeting in Paris. The Tunisian writer Hélé Béji, writing in an edition of the journal *La Revue des Deux Mondes* entitled 'Nous autres, Méditerranéens', identifies the colonial legacy and the asymmetry of power and development that exists between the European nations of the Mediterranean and its eastern and southern coastlines. Béji too raises the issue of mobility, noting in particular that the youth of North Africa and the Middle East are prisoners of a difference that restricts travel to Europe. For Béji, the antiquity and layered complexity of the Mediterranean remain as antidotes to a project that she suspects is hegemonic. She argues that it is to this Mediterranean antiquity that those who live on its shores need to return if 'humanism' is to be salvaged. And central to her humanist argument, inspired by Montesquieu, is '*le droit au voyage*' [the right to travel].¹⁹

Béji is but one of many intellectuals and writers who have returned to the Mediterranean in an effort to counter prevailing ideologies.²⁰ Artemis Leontis argues that the Mediterranean serves as an 'important counter-topos of critical thought', given that its shores have provided stories and histories that have converged on common themes for centuries. As such, these narratives 'deserve further exploration both from a comparative historical perspective and from a theoretical standpoint that contemplates how people inhabit separate worlds together'.²¹ Franco Cassano's Mediterranean is also conceived in terms of its counter-hegemonic possibilities. He develops these thoughts in his exploration of the Mediterranean as a 'sense of measure' between a 'fundamentalism' of the land — such as doctrinal market capitalism or Islamist identitarianism — and a 'fundamentalism' of the sea that negates the idea of return to the shoreline, of refuge, of a bounded horizon.²² For Cassano the Mediterranean offers 'measure and balance' that counter such fundamentalisms.²³

This recent return to the Mediterranean as a way of interrogating hardening identitarian accretions — whether Western or Eastern — is also a feature of Kapuściński's series of essays that reflect upon his itinerant life as a journalist accompanied by Herodotus's *Histories*.²⁴ In one essay, he recalls how, on arriving in Algiers, he read the port city as an intersection between two great conflicts of the contemporary world, the first being the conflict between Christianity and Islam and the second being a conflict at the 'very heart of Islam, between its open, dialectical current — [he] would even venture to say "Mediterranean" — and its other, inward looking current, born of a sense of uncertainty and confusion vis-à-vis the contemporary world'.²⁵ Perhaps too simplistically, Kapuściński names this latter version 'the Islam of the desert'. Nevertheless, the Mediterranean is presented as a counter-balance to the desert; it is a place in which is found the 'faith of merchants, itinerant peddlers, people of the road and of the bazaar, for whom openness, compromise, and exchange are not only beneficial to trade, but necessary to life itself'.²⁶

A focus on the Mediterranean as a single liquid plane and on travel across its waters as a form of enlightenment can be seen too in the writings of the Italian

novelist and essayist Vincenzo Consolo, which have been described as constituting a ‘Mediterranean paradigm’ that ‘emphasi[zes] the dialectic between land and sea, between reason and chaos’.²⁷ Consolo draws on history to disturb the congealed truths of the present. He returns his readers to past travellers such as Ibn Jubayr (1145–1217), whose pilgrimage between 1183 and 1185 saw him travel across the Mediterranean from Grenada to Ceuta and on to Alexandria, Mecca, Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus and Acre before beginning the journey back to Spain via Sicily.²⁸ By drawing up to the surface of the present moments in the past Consolo creates salutary ironies often related to the treatment of immigrants in Italy. His invocation of Ibn Jubayr’s narrative acts as a spur; indeed it is an important counterpoint to what Iain Chambers describes as

the Renaissance idealization of the Greek and Latin world, which resulted in a humanist intent on classical purity [... and which] has persistently excluded the momentous historical and cultural contamination of the interceding centuries and, in particular, the centrality of Arab and Islamic culture in treasuring and transmitting that very same inheritance.²⁹

Chambers’s work suggests a different humanist genealogy or, better again, a richer and more complex one.

Indeed it is this diversity of cultural interactions over time and across the sea which makes the ‘Mediterranean’ difficult to define precisely. Thomas K. Schippers is, for example, sceptical of an ‘anthropology of the Mediterranean’: ‘nice to think, hard to find’, he writes.³⁰ Schippers suggests that the ‘Mediterranean’ is, in part, a nineteenth-century academic construction.³¹ Predrag Matvejević, in his evocative and beautifully illustrated work *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape*, explores the physicality of the Mediterranean not in an attempt to delimit it but as a tool to explore its strata through history, literature and even climate, and in doing so he meditates on such elements as waves, currents, clouds, rain, gulfs, and even seagulls. He, too, remains aware of the difficulties of attempting to define the Mediterranean:

Its boundaries are drawn in neither space nor time. There is in fact no way of drawing them: they are neither ethnic nor historical, state nor national; they are like a chalk circle that is constantly traced and erased, that the winds and waves, that obligations and inspirations expand or reduce.³²

Whether one agrees with this point of view or not, it can be argued that the renewal of interest in the Mediterranean — as form, as paradigm, as a prompt to tolerance, as a reservoir of the past, as a physical space resistant to definition, and as a site of confrontation and dialogue — responds to a need for a *critical* return to European humanist traditions which, though often complicit with the production of Otherness, may yet serve to inform how we negotiate alterity.

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This collection aims to analyse a range of texts that involve travel and intercultural reflection and that are representative of different periods and locations across the Mediterranean. No attempt is made to anthologize or supply an exhaustive overview,

instead this volume seeks to furnish comparative contexts that might contribute to further debate within the field of travel studies. In particular, we draw attention to the persistence of narratives of travel across the centuries within the Mediterranean and to the evolution of a European humanist tradition which, though central to the construction of the Other, of the Orient, can be used to rethink relations between peoples across the Mediterranean and beyond. As Dominic Thomas remarks it is ‘literature that is best equipped to imagine and define the kinds of human interrelationships that will enable translation and mediation’, that is, the skills that allow for exchange.³³ As such, this transdisciplinary collection revolves around travel writing and its relationship to the production and mediation of the Other set in the Mediterranean region. Our contributors come from a number of different disciplines: Italian, French, Classics, English, Comparative Literature, Political Science, History, Hispanic Studies, and Neo-Latin. And our aim is not to set constraints or to delimit generic categorizations or spatial setting rigidly but rather to investigate how concepts of genre, alterity and the Mediterranean are played out across different chronological periods and in a variety of cultural contexts. This range of essays provides a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. And, through the juxtaposition of one contribution with the next, fruitful tensions and contrasting interpretations of the Mediterranean emerge.

The volume begins with Noreen Humble’s reconsideration of Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (fourth century BCE) in terms of travel writing. It is a work rarely mentioned in discussion of the history of travel writing, despite its vast and influential afterlife which rivals that of the *Odyssey*, Herodotus’s *Histories* and Pausanias’s *Description of Greece* — familiar names from Greek literature more often linked to discussions on travel writing. Humble notes that part of the difficulty with interpreting the *Anabasis* is precisely the issue of its genre. Though recently scholars have favoured labelling it ‘war memoir’, she suggests that perhaps this is too narrow an approach and proceeds to examine the work in terms of travel and its complex textualization. Drawing together diverse scholarship, she shows how central to the work concerns with alterity and identity are, and how complex the presentation of the geography of the Mediterranean is in terms of how the Greeks viewed it. In particular there is a tension between the way in which we can observe the whole of the Mediterranean world being mapped as ‘Greek’ through mythology, and the insistence in the work’s internal rhetoric upon a narrow definition of what, topographically, Hellas (i.e. Greece) actually was.

The notions of centre and periphery are brought to the fore when we read the first two chapters. While in Chapter 1 the fringes of the Greek world are mapped by a Greek from the centre of Hellas (i.e. Xenophon from Athens), in the second chapter Maria Pretzler examines a work in which the centre of Hellas (the Greek mainland) is mapped by a Greek from the fringes (i.e. Pausanias from Asia Minor). Pausanias is writing seven centuries or so after Xenophon and travelling around a Greece which has been firmly under Roman rule for several hundred years. His *Description of Greece*, whatever his original intentions, came to be used as a guidebook for those travelling to Greece particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, he has been (in)famously dubbed ‘the Greek Baedeker’ — after the travel guide

series set up by Karl Baedeker in the early nineteenth century³⁴ — and whatever one's particular view on the appropriateness of this nickname, the fact remains that Pausanias as Baedeker continues to be a frequent starting point for discussions of his work.³⁵ Another fruitful strand of scholarship, led by Jas Elsner, has looked at Pausanias and his work from the angle of pilgrimage, comparing his work to that of later Christian pilgrims like Egeria (cf. Chapter 3 of this volume), though carefully noting important differences, particularly in the way Pausanias presents 'conflicting myth-histories' rather than tying his 'sense of place' to one orthodox text as the Christians did.³⁶ Pretzler moves us away from both these points of debate and asks us to view the work as a subversion of ethnographic forms of writing. The Other, rather than being a foreign people, is Pausanias's own ethnic group, the Greeks. But the picture drawn is not homogenous. For example, Pausanias clearly favours the Classical Greek past over the archaic period, and while he enriches his own identity with unexpected stories and art of the more distant past, he also has a tendency to regard this earlier period as Other.

In tracking changes of perspective in pilgrimage narratives that date mainly between the seventh and twelfth centuries, Suha Kudsieh, in Chapter 3, argues that this particular form of travel writing provides an insight into the acute fracture of Mediterranean culture into Christian and Islamic spheres of influence. She identifies the Crusaders' defeat in the thirteenth century as critical to the European perception of Islam as a threat, not simply to those who wished to travel to Palestine, but to Christendom itself. Pilgrimage is a form of writing conventionally associated with Christianity but the tradition was also active within the Islamic world.³⁷ Kudsieh discusses pilgrimage as a subgenre of travel writing, noting a number of pragmatic features that generate its specificity, namely those related to the fulfilment of a religious purpose. She notes too the comparative and self-definitional features of the genre, elements that it shares with travel writing in general. Prior to the Crusades, Islam is seen as clearly different and as an impediment to travel but was not perceived as a threat. Pilgrims' accounts begin to change after the beginning of the Crusade wars and the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. Theodorich's account of his pilgrimage of 1187 represents Muslims in a way that suggests that the spiritual quest of earlier pilgrimage narratives has been replaced by a crusading quest that mirrors the struggle for military supremacy in the region. This binary perspective dominates pilgrimage narratives until after the fifteenth century. And while the oppositional narrative continues, greater interest is given to the physical world and cultural setting of the inhabitants encountered beyond Christendom. A hermeneutics of the Other begins to come to the fore.

In Chapter 4 Daria Perocco analyses the shifts in outlook from the medieval to the Renaissance to the Baroque traveller as regards foreign cultures. Her essay focuses primarily on Italian travellers during the Renaissance — da Mosto, Carletti, Vettori, Pigafetta and Ramusio, among others — and how they wrote about their encounters with other cultures located, for example, in the Ottoman Empire, which had stretched to North Africa by the sixteenth century. Perocco compares the attitudes of these travellers, whose journeys more often than not took place as diplomatic missions for the Venetian Republic, with those of travellers to the

New World. Because of travel accounts which described contact with the New World, Perocco maintains, Venetian travel reports were able to address encounters with the Mediterranean Other in a more open manner, while at the same time asserting their presumed cultural superiority. For the Renaissance Venetian traveller, then, the Mediterranean comprised both the known (familiar territory) as well as the unknown (places visited less frequently), yet the travel accounts these emissaries produced did not rely on received knowledge of the *auctoritates* but rather furnished their own personal observations about the foreign cultures visited, and their accounts are characterized, Perocco argues, by a certain 'objectivity' and receptivity towards the Other. This stance changes, however, with the onset of the Baroque period, typified instead by an involution of vision whereby travellers see what they want to see, and describe foreign countries accordingly, reading reality anthropomorphically or even resorting to fantasy in their descriptions. One interpretation of this might be that these humanist travel narratives are more about projections and categorizations than enquiry.

Zweder von Martels shows in Chapter 5 how contemporary debate about whether or not Turkey should be included in the European Union echoes concerns expressed between European nations and the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century. The vehicle for his examination is the writing of the Flemish humanist Augerius Busbequius, a complex character whose experience of the Turks came through serving as the ambassador of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria to the Ottoman court of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566). Attention is focused primarily upon four letters which Busbequius composed later in his life with the benefit of hindsight. Von Martels carefully brings out the different viewpoints on the Turks which emerge in Busbequius's writings: at times Busbequius seems to warn of the need for vigilance, at times he seems to advise greater rapprochement with the Ottoman Empire. An important element in his assessment of the Other on an individual level was whether or not someone, of whatever cultural background, shared European humanist values.

Chapter 6 moves us into the seventeenth century with Nathalie Hester's analysis of Italian Baroque travel writing. Hester also examines this ideal notion of shared humanist values but from a different angle, showing how intrinsic it was as a proto-national cultural characteristic in the Italian peninsula, which, at that time, was constituted by city states. The focus of her analysis, however, is not a diplomat in the service of a prince, but an independent traveller, Pietro Della Valle; and though he too travels through the Ottoman Empire his focus is, in general, more on himself and his own experiences. Like Busbequius he judges others by humanist values, but unlike Busbequius, who comes from northern Europe, Della Valle's Italy, was, at that point, on the margins of power in European terms.

In Chapter 7 Roxanne Euben examines the work of Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi (1801–1873) and asks if the view from Islamic Egypt of the European as Other offers different insights through its inversion of the conventional European travel corpus. Tahtawi travelled to France as a scholar and as *imam* to the forty-four other students sent to the military school in Paris by Muhammad 'Ali, the Ottoman ruler of Egypt, to study post-Revolutionary France and to train as a translator. In 1834, three years

after his return, he published *Takhlis al-Ibriz ila Talkhis Bariz* [*The Extraction of Gold from a Distillation of Paris*]. The purpose of the book was to extract from France the metaphorical gold that would benefit Egypt, and Tahtawi steers a course 'between enthusiasm and scepticism', between a loss of what constitutes the Self and Nation and the task of bringing new insights into society and science that could usefully be incorporated, without appearing too unacceptably alien to the conventions of his contemporary Egypt. In the end a 'double perspective' of France and Egypt emerge, one that offers a broadened understanding of both and an insight into the 'dialectical process of acquiring and producing knowledge about others'.

Susan Bassnett, in Chapter 8, examines the relationship between the British female travel writer and the Italian Other. Her analysis focuses on texts penned about Italy as a single nation located in the Mediterranean, as opposed to the conglomerate of nations that border the sea itself. Bassnett examines three particular cases of upper-middle-class women who wrote about their travels to Italy in a manner that appealed to British readers of the Victorian era, reiterating a concept that they would have found reassuring, namely, the superiority of the British vis-à-vis the Italians. At the same time, Bassnett points out the hybridity inherent to travel writing as a genre, indicating that the texts by the three women she examines, though all autobiographical accounts of time spent in Italy, are quite diverse. Catherine Davies's *Eleven Years' Residence in the Family of Murat, King of Naples* (1842) is an account of her time spent in Italy looking after Napoleon's nieces and nephews, concentrating on people and events, while saying little about the Italian locations themselves. *A Year of Consolation* (1847) is the emotionally frank yet predictable text by the abolitionist Fanny Kemble, aka Mrs Butler, written about the period she spent in Italy immediately following her divorce from her slave-owning husband. And Frances Elliott's wry *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* (1871) provides a disenchanted and humorous view of the Italy of her time. Bassnett points out that these texts, while giving us as readers a window onto Victorian Britain's ideas on Italy, say much as well about the writers' identity as women who are unafraid to make statements that reflect their own independence of thought.

In Chapter 9 Patrick Crowley's reading of Eugène Fromentin's travelogues argues that they are as much about the pursuit of aesthetic form as they are about the inscription of his travels through the former Ottoman regency of Algiers, invaded by France in 1830. Fromentin is largely sympathetic to Islam — its practices of hospitality for example — but while his familiarity with Greek and Roman history and culture suggests to him that empires come to an end, his representation of Muslim Arabs figures them as noble, archaic repositories of pre-modern civilization and thus no longer a threat but an opportunity, rather, for the artist to re-think classical form through these contemporary avatars of an ancient world. His writings draw attention to how his eye framed and sought to capture the world he saw in French Africa and can be read as metonymic articulations of how European expansion across the Mediterranean in the nineteenth century privileged the scopic over the auditory.

Through his reading of Jacques Lacarrière's travel narrative *L'Été grec* (1975) as well as Lacarrière's accounts of ancient travel in the Mediterranean, *En cheminant*

avec Hérodote (1981), in Chapter 10 Charles Forsdick explores the Mediterranean as a medium through which identity, both national and individual, has been constructed, questioned and attenuated. In Lacarrière's work form is disrupted and the genre of travel writing is prized open in a way that heightens the subjectivity of a traveller who seeks to listen rather than to capture spectacle. Lacarrière's approach corresponds to a humanist model that goes back to Herodotus: it is not about access to the Other but about attending to other human beings and the specific contexts of where they dwell and how they see the world. Lacarrière listens, in contrast to Fromentin, and sees, and travels in a decelerated manner in order to understand and counter the 'growing identitarian, essentializing logic of encounter'. Travel should unsettle such identities and open them up to identities beyond the self. Forsdick's reflections move beyond a Mediterranean as a de-historicized, syncretic space of cultural fusion and he argues that encounters between diverse elements in the Mediterranean are held within a perpetual tension that generates a re-conceptualization of space in which difference is sometimes accepted and often refused.

Silvia Ross's essay in Chapter 11 investigates the role of food and the depiction of the Other in two contemporary American travel writers who portray central Italy and, to a lesser extent, other areas bordering the Mediterranean. Her analysis outlines how the two authors' works problematize the notion of genre: Frances Mayes's *Under the Tuscan Sun* (1996) and her related, subsequent texts involve a re-settlement in Italy, thus limiting the paradigm of mobility to a kind of upper-class migration, while Gary Paul Nabhan's *Songbirds, Truffles and Wolves* (1993) employs the framework of a Franciscan 'pilgrimage' to discuss in reality questions concerning nature and the environment. The two authors' treatment of roughly analogous locales diverges quite radically. Mayes uses food as a short cut to connect with the host culture, without actually confronting the social, economic and political context in which she resides, all the while distancing the Other and profiting from the Other's culture by both ingesting and publishing on the regional cuisine. Nabhan, on the other hand, as an expert in the field of ethno-botany, examines the issue of food and identity in a much more nuanced fashion, displaying a sensitized approach to the local gastronomy and the foodstuffs produced in the area. His travelogue is enriched, furthermore, by his insistence on the criss-crossings of seeds, plants and culinary traditions between Italy (representative of the Mediterranean more generally) and North America, thus constructing a narrative that, like the Mediterranean itself, is formed by an intermingling of a wide variety of cultures and gastronomic practices.

Chapter 12 is Martín Veiga's analysis of Rafael Chirbes's collection of travel writing narratives *Mediterráneos* (1997). In each of these narratives Chirbes travels through the past and the present of twelve Mediterranean locations as diverse as Istanbul, Venice, Alexandria, Valencia and Cairo. Chirbes is primarily interested in Mediterranean cities and how each one provides a text through which he can read his past as well as the past of absent Mediterraneans: that of his childhood, that of history and that of myth. Veiga tracks Chirbes's nostalgia, his search for 'home', for 'belonging', and for 'identity' within the cities that surround the Mediterranean

shoreline. As Veiga notes, this is not about the strangeness of alterity but about the replication of the same across different locations and through time. Indeed, what disturbs Chirbes, what awakens him to change, and perhaps intensifies his nostalgia, is a Mediterranean shoreline increasingly blighted by development. Accompanied by Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Chirbes draws on Braudel's view of different temporalities in his construction of a Mediterranean that palliates the absence of 'home'.

At one point in his chapter, Forsdick refers to the journeys undertaken by Algerian workers who travelled across the Mediterranean to work in the factories that generated France's post-war economic boom that lasted from the 1950s to the mid 1970s, and sees such movement as a 'prizing open of the notion of the journey', a prompt to re-think the relationship between travel writing and travel. The volume's final chapter, by Derek Duncan, responds to such a spur. Duncan's contribution, 'Grave Unquiet: The Mediterranean and its Dead', stretches the definition of travel writing to include the fictional imagining by an Italian journalist, Giovanni Maria Bellu, of the life and thoughts of a drowned refugee, the Sri Lankan Tamil Anpalagan Ganeshu, one of the 283 fatalities in a shipwreck off the coast of Sicily in December 1996. Duncan's piece richly problematizes many issues related to travel writing, both in terms of content and of genre, and is the essay which focuses most directly of all on the Mediterranean Sea as geographical entity, as the element which provides a thoroughfare between cultures but also has its victims in the contemporary migration of peoples across its waters. Bellu's *I fantasmi di Portopalo* (2004) recounts the journalist's own investigation into the 'forgotten' tragedy, and also provides a fictionalized account of Anpalagan's own journey, reconstructed through testimony provided by his family and friends as well as survivors of the shipwreck. Duncan illustrates how the text constructs two visions of the Mediterranean: one as a 'fractured geopolitical entity' and another which is anthropomorphized, archaic, and to which is attributed a sort of agency. He also highlights the paradoxical and complex situation evoked by Bellu's text, whereby the author attempts to voice the thoughts and recount the story of a deceased 'subaltern' migrant (who cannot speak for himself) in his effort to establish an archive of 'memory' about the event. Despite the ambiguities of the exercise, Bellu's text, contends Duncan, ultimately constitutes a 'revised account of the Mediterranean as the place of the postcolonial subject whose multiform presence may yet challenge the space of the nation'.



The Mediterranean has offered the promise of grandeur and gain to traders, travellers, adventurers, politicians, writers, painters, immigrants and the long-term result has been to re-affirm and disappoint these possibilities in ways that reiterate the past differently but return us to individuals, to the human and to geography. Fernand Braudel's work cautions against the construction of a Mediterranean entity, a conceptual identity that would embrace the particulars of its physical and cultural realities. On one temporal level, he focuses on the reign of Philip II of Spain (1527–1598) and brings the second volume of his work to a close with a poignant

account of Philip II's final hours that includes the following, salutary, observation:

He was not a man of vision: he saw his task as an unending succession of small details. [...]. Never do we find general notions or grand strategies under his pen. I do not believe that the word Mediterranean itself ever floated in his consciousness with the meaning we now give it.³⁸

If Braudel's envoi of the 1946 edition contrasts with Nicolas Sarkozy's grand strategy, it also prompts a final reflection as we bring this collection of articles together. To construct a Mediterranean and to incorporate Mediterranean writings into such a structure should not serve to hypostatize the Mediterranean and travel writings relating to the Mediterranean; rather it should bring to the fore the complexity and instability that need to be maintained if a contemporary critical humanism is to have any value.

Notes to the Introduction

1. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 11.
2. For an insightful and rigorous analysis of travel literature and genre see Chapter 1, 'Travel Literature and/as Genre', in Charles Forsdick, Feroza Basu and Siobhán Shilton, *New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French: Genre, History, Theory* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006). See also Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 8–9. Jan Borm problematizes the classification of travel writing as a distinct genre in his 'Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology' and Tim Youngs stresses the transdisciplinarity of travel writing in 'Where are we going? Cross-border Approaches to Travel Writing', both of which are found in the collection *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 13–26 and 167–80 respectively.
3. Geographer Russell King discusses the difficulty in delimiting the region: 'To define the Mediterranean is not an easy task. In some senses it is probably a pointless exercise, for there is no single criterion which enables one to draw a line on a map which separates the Mediterranean from the non-Mediterranean. Mediterranean identity is a more nebulous, but powerful, concept that derives from environmental characteristics, cultural features and, above all, from the spatial interactions between the two. The Mediterranean is a sea, a climate, a landscape, a way of life — all of these and much more.' Russell King, 'Introduction: An Essay on Mediterraneanism', in *The Mediterranean Environment and Society*, ed. by Russell King, Lindsay Proudfoot and Bernard Smith (London and New York: Arnold, 1997), pp. 1–11 (p. 2).
4. As Iain Chambers argues (*Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 39): 'If Ulysses is the mythical figure of the traveller, the stranger, with which that history [of migrating cultures] commences, it is once again with the traveller and the stranger that this history continues.'
5. François Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 22.
6. Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus*, p. ix.
7. In this volume Xenophon (Chapter 1), Sæwulf (Chapter 3), Della Valle (Chapter 6), Fromentin (Chapter 9), and Lacarrière (Chapter 10) all draw upon this key narrative. See also Javier Reverte, *Corazón de Ulises* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2006), noted in Chapter 12, note 3; and on this phenomenon in general H. Henderson, 'The Travel Writer and the Text: "my giant goes with me wherever I go"', in *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, ed. by M. Kowalewski (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 230–48.
8. For example, for Xenophon (Chapter 1), Pausanias (Chapter 2) and Lacarrière (Chapter 10).

- And for such modern authors as Ryszard Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, trans. by Klara Glowczewska, (New York: Vintage, 2008), and Justin Marozzi, *The Man Who Invented History: Travels with Herodotus* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2008).
9. First published in French, Hartog's *Le Miroir d'Hérodote: Essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1980), was followed not long after by an English translation (*The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. by J. Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)).
 10. For a critique see the judicious comments of Carolyn Dewald, 'Review of *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* by François Hartog', in *Classical Philology*, 85/3 (1990), 217–24.
 11. As a glance at bibliographies in books on travel writing and on the Mediterranean shows.
 12. And such stereotypes persist. Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, pp. 5–6 note that despite some contemporary travel writers addressing identity and cultural difference with subtlety and complexity, 'Travel writing in the late twentieth century continues to be haunted by the spectre of cliché: its catalogues of anomalies are often recorded in remarkably similar terms. The same words and phrases crop up again and again, the same myths and stereotypes, the same literary analogies.'
 13. Theorists and critics have studied the question of stereotyping of the Other at length; some representative cases include: Homi K. Bhabha's essay ('The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 66–84); Stephen Harold Riggins's introduction to his volume *The Language and Politics of Exclusion: Others in Discourse* (London: Sage, 1997), pp. 1–20, where he explores what kind of language is used to categorize the Other; or Tzvetan Todorov, in particular in relation to the conquest of the 'New World' and the concepts such as exoticism and primitivism, as can be seen in his key texts *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism and Exoticism in French Thought*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) (originally published as *Nous et les autres: La Réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1979)) and *The Conquest of America*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) (originally published as *La Conquête de l'Amérique* (Paris: Seuil, 1982)), where he includes a section on 'Typology of Relations to the Other'. See also Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).
 14. Tellingly, as Fabian points out, 'Somehow the discipline [of anthropology] "remembers" that it acquired its scientific and academic status by climbing on the shoulders of adventurers and using their travelogues, which for centuries had been the appropriate literary genre in which to report knowledge of the Other.' Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 87.
 15. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).
 16. Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Other*, trans. by Antonia Lloyd-Jones (London and New York: Verso, 2008), p. 44.
 17. Katrin Bennhold, 'Will Sarkozy's Mediterranean union be more than a big photo-op?', *The New York Times*, 14 July 2008, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/14/world/europe/14iht-france.4.14488640.html>> [accessed 15 April 2009].
 18. Ali Bensaad, 'Pour les Européens, s'agit-il de contenir le Sud ou de s'ouvrir à lui?', *Le Monde*, 11 July 2008, p. 18.
 19. Hélène Béji, 'Méditerranée: La Demeure du temps', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (June 2008), 110–18 (p. 118).
 20. For an excellent analysis of the 'Mediterranean turn' in Italian thought see Claudio Fogu, 'From *Mare Nostrum* to *Mare Aliorum*: Mediterranean Theory and Mediterraneanism in Contemporary Italian Thought', *California Italian Studies*, 1/1 (2010), 1–23.
 21. Artemis Leontis, 'Introduction', *Thesis Eleven*, 67 (2001), iii–v (p. v).
 22. Franco Cassano, 'Southern Thought', *Thesis Eleven*, 67 (2001), 1–10 (pp. 4–5, 9).
 23. Franco Cassano, 'Southern Thought', p. 9.
 24. Ryszard Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, p. 226.
 25. Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, p. 227.
 26. Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, p. 228.

27. Norma Bouchard and Massimo Lollini, 'Introduction: Vincenzo Consolo and his Mediterranean Paradigm', in *Reading and Writing the Mediterranean: Essays by Vincenzo Consolo*, ed. by Norma Bouchard and Massimo Lollini (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 3–48 (p. 27).
28. Consolo, 'Ibn Jubayr', trans. by Felice Italo Beneduce, in Bouchard and Lollini, eds, *Reading and Writing the Mediterranean*, pp. 233–36.
29. Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossings*, p. 150.
30. Thomas K. Schippers, 'Nice to Think, Hard to Find', in *L'Anthropologie de la Méditerranée / Anthropology of the Mediterranean*, ed. by Dionigi Albera, Anton Blok and Christian Bromberger (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001), pp. 725–29.
31. On this debate see Fogu, 'From *Mare Nostrum* to *Mare Aliorum*', pp. 2–7.
32. Predrag Matvejević, *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape*, trans. by Michael Henry Jeim (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999).
33. See, for example, Dominic Thomas, 'The Global Mediterranean: Literature and Migration', in *Francophone sub-Saharan African Literature in Global Contexts*, ed. by Alain Mabanckou and Dominic Thomas, *Yale French Studies* (forthcoming 2011).
34. For a succinct overview of the Baedeker guides see Rudy Koshar, "'What ought to be seen": Tourists' Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33/3 (1998), 323–40 (pp. 330–34).
35. E.g. Christian Habicht, 'An Ancient Baedeker and his Critics: Pausanias' "Guide to Greece"', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 129/2 (1985), 220–24.
36. Jas Elsner, 'Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World', *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), 5–29 (p. 28 for the quotations).
37. See for example Houari Touati, *Islam et voyage au moyen âge: Histoire et anthropologie d'une pratique lettrée* (Paris: Seuil, 2000). Touati argues that unlike the Western European view of travel as a hermeneutics of the Other, medieval Islamic travellers were more concerned with an exegetical construction of the Same: the reiteration of an Islamic space (*dār al-islām*) within which Muslims can live according to the precepts of the Koran (pp. 10–11).
38. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. by Siân Reynolds, 2 vols (London: Collins, 1972–73), II, 1236.

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